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I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the [illegible] or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

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similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback.

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her!

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor.

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening,

[1] See p. 87.

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selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḳḳ*, which are

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

" *Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ* " (" Better, much better "), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of " *Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !* " (" O my brother, my brother ! ").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(51)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(51a).

535 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11)

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah ! Allah !" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again.

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support.

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard.

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence.

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found.

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (11)

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants:

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band.

4. The musical band (1):

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted.

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra

(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [535]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirits pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 523
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755 786 533 535

who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and eventually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later. [198]

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed. 755 782

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits. 755 776 [192]

   Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that [171]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x
3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes. [286] [354]
5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red". [826]
6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd). [826]

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis ʿagātak,
*Ya mišša*ḥ*laʿ min dān aḥwātak,*
nuṣṣ el-lēl nismaʿ ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Išša*ḥ*laʿ refers to the coquettish movements in dancing and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent. [535]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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527 524 [279] [273] trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 [533] [535] Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *bals*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. [354] Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number 527 535 [292] [301] of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The 533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground; 534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings 527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

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Dancing-girl.

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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters

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535 527 [534] the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients), and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For 533 [558] a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion, 527 793 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, [171] but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 527 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much

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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533]
while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534]
under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838]
the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 799
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before.

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments.

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:—

"She (the loved one) has made me a cap
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
795 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[796] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-